G.A.R.

1866

THE SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

THE CLARION CALL

Newsletter of the Department of Massachusetts

VOLUME No. I ISSUE No. III OCTOBER 2002

S.U.V.C.W.

1881

THE BATTLE OF ST. MARY'S

by L. Earle Brick
L.A.Tifft Camp 15

There was a time when the Stars and Stripes waving over the grave of a deceased veteran meant something to all Americans. It said, "Here lies a soldier, a man who served his country, someone who gave of himself to help keep this land free."

Now, it seems, the courts of the Commonwealth have decided that the Flag doesn't say anything anymore. They have decided that Veterans buried in some cemeteries, and the families that survive them or are descended from them, have no Constitutional rights with regard to flying the colors of this country over a grave. They have said that flying the Flag doesn't have anything to do with freedom of expression or speech. They have, in effect, said that when and where a person may display our National colors on a grave can be dictated to us by an agent of an entity whose headquarters are located in a foreign country.

That agent? The Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield. That entity? The Church in Rome.

Early in 2002 the management of St. Mary's Cemetery in Westfield, Mass. was taken over by the Diocese of Springfield. At that time, they put in place a new set of rules with regard to how people could decorate graves there. These rules mostly pertained to the placement of flowers and decorations, and the times during the year when they would be allowed to place them. However, one of these new rules states that, going forward, the American Flag may only be flown one week before and one week after Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

For nearly 60 years, Post 124 of the American Legion in Westfield has taken on the responsibility of replacing weathered gravesite Flags at St. Mary's. They would be replaced by new Flags on Memorial Day, and the old ones disposed of in a respectful manner. But, the Diocese said this could be no more.

The Diocese then began to execute a plan to bend the shafts of the memorial plaques, (sometimes called flagholders, *and some of them over 100 years old!*) push them flush to the ground, drill a hole in them, and mount the Flags through this hole and into the ground. This was done to about 80 such plaques without regard to their antiquity and without any attempt at contacting the deceased's families for permission.

Robbie Barniard, a representative of the Diocese, appeared at a Westfield Veterans Council meeting, and explained that the plan was an effort to make maintenance more cost effective, and that the flagholders were, in fact, a hazard to people, when mowing was being done. The worker doing the mowing would have to stop and move the flag, and then stop again and replace it.

Now, keeping in mind the fact that two 10" flower pots would be allowed on each grave, it didn't seem to make sense that only the Flags were "in the way". This representative made statements and promises with regard to the matter, none of which, it seems, were kept.

So, a complaint was filed and a hearing held in Superior Court in Springfield, Mass., at which Larry Black Wolf, Veterans Graves Officer, and Lester Eldridge acted as plaintiffs. At this hearing , Judge Peter Velis stated that he wished to review the matter , and in June 2002 issued a Temporary Injunction, forbidding the Diocese from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Contact the Editors at: THE CLARION CALL 14 Crestview Terrace Gloucester, MA 01930

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS
2002—2003

Commander
Robert H. Knight
P.O. Box 384
Feeding Hills, MA 01030-0384
(413) 786-0703
Email: dc@suvmass.org

Senior Vice Commander
John W. Bates III
117 Trenton Street
Melrose, MA 02176
(781) 662-7758
Email: svc@suvmass.org

Jr. Vice Commander
Kevin P. Tucker
14 Crestview Terrace
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 282-0002
Email: jvc@suvmass.org

Treasurer
Edward W. Parks
P.O. Box 411
Middleboro, MA 02346-3118
(508) 947-4572
Email: treasurer@suvmass.org

Secretary
William Ryerson
P.O. Box 11
Winchester, MA 01890
(781) 729-3311
Email: secretary@suvmass.org

Council Member
Paul Jancewicz
19 Whittier Avenue
Amesbury, MA 01913
(978) 834-0142
Email: council@suvmass.org

Council Member
Daniel Burns
15 Spruce Street
Malden, MA 01248
(781) 397-9208
Email: councilsec@suvmass.org

Council Member
A. Dean Sargent
83 Concord Street
Rockland, MA 02370
(781) 878-9470
Email: councilchair@suvmass.org

Chaplain
Martin Kennedy
34 Pickering Street
Winchester, MA 01890
(781) 729-5645
Email: chaplain@suvmass.org

Chief of Staff
Robert F. Anderson
P.O. Box 172
Norfolk, MA 02056
(508) 528-3974
Email: chief@suvmass.org

Civil War Graves Chair
Douglas E. Jenkins
80 Marshland Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
Email: graves@suvmass.org

Counselor
Peter Rotando
76 Sterling Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
(508) 835-4896
Email: counselor@suvmass.org

Patriotic Instructor
Roy L. Henry, Jr.
10 Bailey Street
Uxbridge, MA 01569
(508) 278-2014
Email: patriot@suvmass.org

Color Bearer
Richard Eccleston, Sr.
1277 Candia Road
Manchester, NH 03109
(603) 645-1193
Email: colors@suvmass.org

GAR Highway Officer
Burt Chandler
(781) 878-3609
Email: highway@suvmass.org

Civil War Memorials Officer
A. Dean Sargent

Historian
A. Dean Sargent

Newsletter Editors
Kevin P. Tucker
John W. Bates III

Eagle Scout Awards Officer
Douglas E. Jenkins

Press Correspondent
William T. Ryerson, Jr.

Signals Officer
Kevin P. Tucker

National Encampment Report

The Department of Massachusetts Delegation to the National Encampment of the SUVCW departed for Springfield, IL, on Tuesday morning, August 6th, 2002. The Department was represented by Dept. Commander Robert H. Knight, Dept. SVC John W. Bates III, Dept. JVC Kevin Tucker, Dept. Secretary William T. Ryerson, Sr., and Dept. Council Member A. Dean Sargent. Frank Tucker also went along on the trip.

The Delegation arrived in Springfield on Tuesday afternoon. Tuesday evening, most members of the Delegation attended an event featuring Civil War music and an Illinois reenacting group performing a mortar salute and the lowering of the colors at President Lincoln's Tomb.

On Wednesday, Delegates visited the Lincoln historic sites around Springfield, Including Lincoln's Home, his Law Office, the Old State House and the G.A.R. Museum.

The Business Sessions were held on Friday, August 9th and Saturday, August 10th. The election of officers went as follows: Robert E. Grim of Ohio was an unopposed candidate, and was elected Commander in Chief. Kent Armstrong of Michigan was also unopposed, and was elected Senior Vice Commander in Chief. The Junior Vice Commander in Chief's race saw Steve Michaels of Wisconsin running against Chuck Young of Pennsylvania, with Steve Michaels winning the office. Robert Petrovic of Michigan also won a seat on the Council of Administration.

Among the other issue voted on was a contest for the preference of the site of the 2005 National Encampment, between New Hampshire and Las Vegas. New Hampshire came out the victor by one vote, 60 to 59.

A $6.00 increase in the annual per capita dues that Departments must pay to National was also approved, bringing the amount due annually from its current $12.00 per member to $18.00 per member, as of January 1, 2003.

And a proposal to impose a penalty of $100.00 on any Department which did not send at least one Delegate to the National Encampment was overwhelmingly defeated.

The Delegation departed Springfield on Sunday morning, August 11th.

Elbowing his way into Heaven...

Our delegation reported an amusing incident which took place on their return flight from Springfield, Illinois to Boston.

When his row was called to board the aircraft, our Department Commander "mistakenly" went directly to the head of the line, and cut in front of Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law, who was returning on the same flight. Commander Knight, when speaking to Cardinal Law as he elbowed his way in front of him, was reported to have committed a second faux-pas by addressing the Cardinal as "Father". Commander Knight pleads ignorance, and when chided by his fellow travelers, he reportedly replied, "What do I know, I'm a Lutheran?

Cartoon by Frank Tucker

"Minutemen of 1861" Medals Stolen from Military History Museum

by Douglass R. Knight, CC
William L. S. Tabor Camp No. 162

Shortly after the cessation of hostilities in 1865, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had approximately 5,000 "Massachusetts Minutemen of 1861" medals struck, one for each of the men who had served in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia Regiments, the first regiments to answer President Lincoln's call for troops to defend Washington, DC, following the Confederates firing on Fort Sumter in April of 1861. Each medal was engraved with the name of the individual soldier for whom it was created.

The men in the aforementioned regiments, who survived the war, were able to apply to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for their medal. Approximately 3,000 medals were claimed by their rightful recipients; and the remaining 2,000 medals remained in the custody of the Massachusetts Militia, unclaimed. They ended up being stored at the Massachusetts Army National Guard Archives and Museum, located at 44 Salisbury Street, in Worcester, Massachusetts.

In February of this year, Dana Essigman of Framingham, MA, a 41 year old archivist at the Massachusetts Army National Guard Archives and Museum in Worcester, was arrested and charged with larceny from a building in connection with the theft of approximately 100 of the "Massachusetts Minutemen of 1861" medals, which he allegedly sold at various militaria shows across New England for $350 each. Mr. Essigman was free on bail, but has since been terminated from his position at the museum.

Anyone with knowledge as to the whereabouts of any of these "Massachusetts Minutemen of 1861" medals is directed to contact Colonel Leonid Kondratiuk at the Massachusetts Army National Guard Archives and Museum at 508-797-0334.

Anyone having any information regarding the theft of these medals is directed to contact Worcester District Attorney John Conte at 508-755-8601.

BATTLE OF ST. MARY'S *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

removing either the Flags or the plaques, or further damaging the same. A skirmish, a small victory. But the battle continued.

After first stating that they wanted a jury trial, the Diocese's lawyers went to Boston and requested and were granted a hearing before an Appeals Judge, Judge Kass, who overturned the injunction. This left the door open for more desecration of plaques and the removal of the flags.

Attorney Peter Vickery of Amherst Mass., who by this time had come to the assistance of the Veterans Council, requested the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to reinstate the injunction until such time as the matter could be brought to trial. This request was refused by Judge Roderick Ireland.

Shortly after Judge Ireland's ruling, The Diocese apparently changed its mind about continuing to drill the holders, and began a process of completely removing all holders and Flags.

At the time that the removals began, Mr. Hugh Lamb of Westfield, MA and I happened to be involved in a program to attempt to document all Civil War Veterans' burial sites within the city of Westfield. During the last week of August, I contacted Mr. Kostik, who was in charge of the operations at the cemetery, and met with him and Mr. Barniard, to explain the situation with regard to Civil War and G.A.R. gravesites. I asked if they could leave the section of the cemetery that I was working in until last when removing the markers, as these G.A.R. markers were, in many cases, the only way of identifying the graves as those of Civil War soldiers. I was assured that they would do this.

Their memories seem to have been short and their honesty and integrity lacking, because the next day Flags and markers were removed from these very sections. This, after I was told that it would be at least a week before they got to those areas.

About a week later, I took off on a long planned trip to Scotland. On my return two weeks later, I learned that the reason for removal may not have been related to maintenance at all. I received reports about how some of the deceased family members had placed small flags in the "allowed" flower pots at the grave sites, only to have them removed by workers once the family members left the cemetery.

One woman had a hole drilled in the base of her family's large upright monument, assuming that a flag mounted in the hole wouldn't possibly be in the way of the mowers and therefore could be left intact. It was promptly removed by cemetery crews.

Cemetery caretakers even had the nerve to tell another woman, when she went to her husband's grave to remove a plaque that she herself had placed there, that she couldn't remove it. (She refused and took it away in spite of what she was told, God Bless her!).

It remains to be seen what will happen at Veterans Day . Will the Arch Dioscese put them back? Will they show some respect to the memory of those who so selflessly served?

In Chapter 272, Section 73 of Massachusetts General Laws, it states that it is a felony to remove Flags, Plaques, Veterans flag holders or anything that is left as a memorial to the dead. IT DOESN'T SAY EXCEPT FOR THE CHURCH. I have always been under the impression that the law was for everybody, and EVERYBODY had to obey it.

The battle continues. A petition is being circulated that would introduce a bill before the Massachusetts State Legislature to protect ALL veterans graves EVERYWHERE in this Commonwealth. If you see this petition, PLEASE SIGN IT. If you would like to help collect signatures for the petition, please contact Dept. JVC Kevin Tucker , (email: jvc@suvmass.com; phone: 617-201-0702) to obtain copies.

SUV HISTORY:
DEVISIVENESS, DISHARMONY MEAN ROUGH START FOR S.U.V. IN MASSACHUSETTS

By A. Dean Sargent
Department Historian

During the early days of the Sons of Union Veterans, Department of Massachusetts, the organization had many difficult problems to overcome and many separate groups vying for power. This situation gave reason for the Grand Army of the Republic to look with disfavor towards them. I have outlined the first few years to give you an idea of their struggle for harmony between the Camps.

In 1882, there were 6 Camps organized, as follows:
Gen, James A. Garfield Camp No. 1, Lynn
Ladd & Whitney Camp No. 2, Lowell
Richard Phillips Camp No. 3, Marblehead
(Unknown Name) Camp No. 4, Peabody
Major E. E. Powers Camp No. 5, Hudson
Major John Low Camp No. 6, Beverly

EARLY FORMATION

"SONS OF VETERANS PROVISIONAL DIVISION
MAY 6, 1882, LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS
The Provisional Division of the Massachusetts Sons of Veterans was organized on the above date, the following officers were appointed:
Colonel, Edwin Earp, Jr., Camp No. 1, Lynn
Lieutenant Colonel and Adjutant Lewis E. Bates, Camp No. 1, Lynn"

On July 12, 1882, a request was received from Camps 3 and 6, in accordance with the rules and regulations, to organize a Permanent Division, and a communication was sent to National Headquarters for permission and authority to organize the same. This request was granted, and an order was issued calling a Convention to be held July 17, 1882.

"***JULY 17, 1882, LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS***
The first Convention of the Sons of Veterans of Massachusetts, was called to order at the G. A. R. Hall, on Monday afternoon, by Col. Edwin Earp, Jr. Twenty-two delegates were present, most notably missing was Camp No. 4, Peabody.
The following officers were elected:
Colonel, Edwin Earp, Jr., Camp No. 1, Lynn
Lt. Col., Henry S. Parker, Camp No. 6, Beverly
Major, John F. Moore, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Adjutant, Lewis E. Bates, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Chaplain, Samuel B. Girdler, Jr., Camp No. 3, Marblehead
Surgeon, W. A. Brown, 2nd, Camp No. 3, Marblehead
Trustees: Harry E. Gray, Camp No. 2, Lowell
Girdley Stacey, Camp No. 3, Marblehead
T. I. Bukhill, Camp No. 5, Hudson
Frank E. Chipman, Camp No. 6, Beverly
Harry E. Mellon, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Quartermaster, Frank E. Chipman, Camp No. 6, Beverly
Judge Advocate, Patrick H. Lahiff, Camp No. 2, Lowell
Inspector, E. E. Whitmore, Camp No. 5, Hudson
Mustering Officer, Frank E. Holland, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Chief Mustering Officer of the National Staff, George N. Goodridge, performed the installation of Officers."

"SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION
DIVISION OF MASS. SONS OF VETERANS
JULY 18, 1883, GRAND ARMY HALL, LYNN"
The Officers Elected were as follows:
Colonel, John F. Moore, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Lt. Colonel, H. S. Parker, Camp No. 6, Beverly
Major, G. H. Pope, Camp No. 5, Hudson
Chaplain, Samuel B. Girdler, Jr., Camp No. 3, Marblehead
Surgeon, J. J. Healey, D. D., Camp 14, Newburyport
Trustees: Charles F. Sargent, Camp No. 21, Lawrence
G. B. Meyers, Camp No. 16, Cambridge
Edwin Earp, Jr., Camp No. 1, Lynn
J. H. Hinckly, Camp No. 6, Beverly
The appointed Officers were as follows:
Quartermaster, Charles H. Foster, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Adjutant, William H. Phillips, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Judge Advocate, Patrick H. Lahiff, Camp No. 2, Lowell
Inspector, Frank E. Holland, Camp No. 1, Lynn
Mustering Officer, L. A. Tifft of Springfield".

A SECOND DIVISION FORMS

"SONS OF VETERANS, U. S. A., PROVISIONAL DIVISION
MARCH 28, 1883, PROCEEDINGS HELD AT LOWELL, MASS.
The following Officers were appointed:
Colonel, Frederick J. Bradford, Camp No. 1, Lowell
Lt. Col. George W. Ward, Camp No. 2, Worcester
Major, C. F. Carling, Camp No. 3, Woburn
Chaplain, J. B. Mac Cabe, Camp No. 4, East Boston
Surgeon, W. T. Souther, Camp No. 2, Worcester
Quartermaster, H. E. Gray, Camp No. 1, Lowell
Adjutant, F. B. Hough, Camp No. 1, Lowell"

There were four new Camps organized at this time having the same Camp numbers as the originals. As you most likely noticed, the Sons had two Massachusetts Divisions now operating at the same time. This Division held its Convention in the Winter months:

"***SONS OF VETERANS, U. S. A., DIVISION OF MASS.,***
FEBRUARY 13, 1884, GRAND ARMY HALL, LOWELL, MASS."
Proceedings of the First Convention of the Sons of Veterans, U. S. A. called to order by Col. Frederick J. Bradford. The only delegates present at this Convention were the Officers of the Provisional Division.
The elected Officers for the ensuing year were as follows:
Colonel, Joseph B. MacCabe, Camp No. 4, East Boston
Lt. Colonel, Frederick J. Bradford, Camp No. 1, Lowell
Major, E. J. Gleason, Camp No. 2, Worcester
Surgeon, Charles M. Wendell, Camp No. 3, Woburn
Delegates to Grand Division: W. K. Stone and E. W. Denett, Camp No. 1, Lowell
Alternates: F. S. Walker, Camp No. 1, Lowell and G. W. Ward, Camp No. 2, Worcester
Delegate to Commander-in-Chief, Charles S. Hines, Camp No. 3, Woburn
Alternate to Commander-in-Chief, G. S. T. Fuller, Camp No. 4, East Boston

SUV HISTORY: continued

THE G. A. R. COMMENTS ON S.U.V. DISUNITY

At the 1884 Department of Massachusetts Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, Commander George S. Evans of the G. A. R. outlined what he thought was the most serious problem.

He said, *"I have been asked a great many times during the past year to recognize, in some manner, the Sons of Veterans organization, or to say a good word in its behalf. This I would have been glad to do if harmony had prevailed in their ranks and their actions in all cases had met with my views.*

There being so many distinct organizations, with apparently an unkindly feeling toward each other, I resolved to keep aloof from them altogether, and have not inquired into the merits of either branch. The organization which presented its case before the National Encampment at Denver, presented the following as its object: To keep green the memories of our fathers, and their sacrifice for the maintenance of the Union; To aid the members of the Grand Army of the Republic in caring for their helpless and disabled veterans; To extend aid and protection to their widows and orphans; To perpetuate the memory and history of their heroic dead, and the proper observation of Memorial Day; To aid and assist worthy and needy members of our Order; To inculcate patriotism and love of country, not only among our membership, but among all the people of the land; And to spread and sustain the doctrines of equal rights, universal liberty, and justice to all. An organization with such noble purposes ought to receive our approval, but it will require harmony and peace all along the line before I can commend it to my comrades."

TOGETHER AT LAST

In the Winter of 1885, the two Divisions finally came to terms and unified. Members from both organizations were present and allowed to vote for officers under the consolidated name of the Sons of Veterans, U. S. A. Officers from both organizations were now vying for the same positions which created some heated battles. The position of Colonel was won by Charles A. Sargent, of Lawrence, by one vote.

"SONS OF VETERANS, U. S. A., DIVISION OF MASS. FEBRUARY 11, 1885

Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Sons of Veterans, U. S. A. were held at the American House, in Boston.
The election of Officers resulted as follows:
Colonel, Charles F. Sargent, Camp No. 21, Lawrence
Lt. Colonel, E. D. Metcalf, Camp No. 1, Lowell
Major, W. R. Stone, Camp No. 1, Lowell
Colonel Sargent appointed the following Officers:
Quartermaster, Charles A. Welch, Camp No. 21, Lawrence
Adjutant, Frank B. Gray, Camp No. 21, Lawrence
Inspector, J. H. Hinckly, Camp No. 6, Beverly
Mustering Officer, C. H. Hillman, Camp No. 16, Cambridge".

TITLE CHANGES

The next change was to the titles of the Officers. Colonel was changed to Commander. Lt. Colonel was changed to Lt. Commander, and Major was changed to Vice-Lt. Commander. The Trustees became the Division Council.

"SONS OF VETERANS, U. S. A.
DIVISION OF MASSACHUSETTS, JUNE 10, 1885

Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Sons of Veterans, U. S. A., Division of Massachusetts was held at the Grand Army Hall, Worcester, Mass., Commander Charles F. Sargent in the chair.
The following elected Officers for the ensuing year were:
Commander, H. S. Crossman, Camp No. 15, Springfield
Lt. Commander, C. H. Messinger, Camp No. 19, Milford
Vice-Lt. Commander, J. T. Bartlett, Camp No. 3, Marblehead
Chaplian, F. T. Leddy, Camp No. 16, Cambridge
Division Council:
Charles F. Sargent, Camp No. 21, Lawrence
Joseph B. MacCabe, Camp No. 4, East Boston
E. H. Dalton, Camp No. 8, Salem
Commissioned Staff:
Quartermaster, H. M. Rennie, Camp No. 15, Springfield
Adjutant, G. Frank Merriam, Camp No. 15, Springfield
Inspector, J. H. Hinckly, Camp No. 6, Beverly
Mustering Officer, C. E. Lovejoy, Camp No. 2, Worcester
Judge Advocate, E. Whittemore, Camp No. 5, Hudson
Non-Commissioned Staff:
Sergeant Major, F. W. Lathrop, Camp No. 15, Springfield
Quartermaster Sergeant, W. H. Stadden, Camp No. 15, Springfield".

The titles of the Officers remained the same until 1892. Then Lt. Commander changed to Senior Vice Commander and Vice-Lt. Commander changed to Junior Vice Commander.

ORGANIZATIONAL NAME CHANGED

There were many changes still to come, but none so important as the name change made in the year 1925. The Sons of Veterans, U. S. A. were under pressure from their friends in the American Legion, who wanted to develop a Sons unit of their own, with the same name. This prompted the name change to The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Street Signs Available for Camps

In an effort to raise public awareness and assist in the recruitment of new members, the Department will purchase up to 6 street signs with the SUVCW logo for each Camp that requests them. The signs are to be used for announcing set dates, times and places of Camp Meetings, (similar to Rotary or Lions Club signs). They should be posted near the town or city line, along major routes.

To apply for the signs, a Camp must obtain written permission from the city or town in which the sign is to be posted, and the camp must accept all liability as to any injury resulting from the signs.

Camps are responsible for having the signs lettered with meeting information.

Contact the Department Secretary for further information.

We Must Do More

By John W. Bates III

Jeremy Glick. Lou Nacke. Mark Bingham. Todd Beamer. Tom Burnett.

Do you know these names? Do you know their story? Do you know what they sacrificed in order to save hundreds of American lives? I hope so.

"Are you guys ready? Let's roll!" These were Todd Beamer's now immortal words aboard United Flight 93 over western Pennsylvania on September 11th, 2001. This group of men willingly sacrificed their lives to thwart the evil plan being carried out by a group of militant Islamic terrorists: To fly a commercial airliner into the United States Capitol Building.

Our ancestors who fought in the Civil War made such sacrifices. They willingly sacrificed their lives to save their country. Their stories are as dramatic and inspiring as those contemporary heroes, Jeremy, Lou, Mark, Todd and Tom, "volunteer soldiers" who struck the first blow and became the first American casualties in our current war on terrorism.

But who will know the names of John Ames, Luther Ladd, Charles Taylor and Addison Whitney? Who will know their stories? Their sacrifices? That's why we're here.

These were the men of the 6th Massachusetts Infantry who, in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 16th, 1861, became the first casualties in the Civil War on the way to Washington to attempt to protect that same United States Capitol Building.

We, the members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War are charged with keeping alive the memory of these men. Across the United States, thousands of SUVCW members honor their Civil War ancestors by joining, participating in, and contributing to our organization.

Here in Massachusetts, we have some talented and capable brothers, who contribute a great deal of their time, energy and ideas in keeping the memories of the men who fought in the Civil War alive. Why do these men contribute so much? Personal gain? Hardly. Recognition? No. I'll tell you why.

It is because they have a deep feeling of appreciation for the sacrifices which led to them being lucky enough to live in the greatest country the world has known. It is because of a pride in having an ancestor who contributed to a positive change in the world and our country, forever. It is because, looking at the sacrifices made by John, Luther, Charles and Addison, (and Jeremy, Lou, Mark, Todd and Tom!) it is the very least we can do, to honor the memory of these men for what they gave us.

Unfortunately, though many of us feel this way, we aren't all contributing as much time and effort as we should. We signed a Membership Application, received a card, and, if it's convenient, perhaps we show up a couple of times a year at a Camp meeting.

Is this why we joined the SUVCW? Is this all we can do to honor these men?

I think we should all take a good look at why we are members of this organization, and ask the question, "What am I doing to help make the order better?". Joining the SUV is only the first step. You are now among like minded individuals who have a pride and appreciation for our history. But, we are not a roundtable discussion group. While we love to learn about and discuss Civil War history, we must do more. We are not a reenacting group. While we love to teach Civil war history and try to impart a real sense of the sacrifices the Civil War soldiers endured, we must do more. We are a unique service organization, with an exclusive membership requirement, (Civil War Soldier, Sailor or Marine ancestry) whose mission is to preserve the memory of the GAR and our Civil War ancestors. Our family.

How can we be passive in this endeavor? If we take great pride as Americans, (as I do) in the actions of the men aboard United Flight 93, - if we wave flags, attend prayer services, and donate money in their memory - how can we do less for the members of our own families who made the same kind of sacrifices?

We must get more active. We must get more involved. If each of us gives the same time and attention to the SUVCW's efforts that we have given to the heroes and victims of September 11th, we can strengthen our organization and fulfill its mission. If we fail to do this, it won't be long before the memory of our ancestors will perish in apathy.

The 2003 Department of Massachusetts Annual Encampment will be held at the
Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center on Cedar Lake
366 Main Street, Sturbridge, Massachusetts
Friday, May 9th and Saturday, May 10th, 2003
SUVCW Room Rate: $94 per night
Call for Reservations: (508) 347-7393

My Civil War Ancestor

By Frank J. Tucker
Charles H. Bond Camp No. 104

Private Charles E. Elwell

My great grandfather, Charles E. Elwell, died a violent death on a Summer evening, in June, 1879. At the time, he was a hackney carriage driver in the city of Boston. He was married, and his wife, Sara Corson had borne him twin children; a boy, Frederick, and a girl, Susan.

He'd gone for an evening stroll, and while rounding the corner of Leverett and Spring streets in Boston's West End, he was set upon and assaulted. He was beaten with a cobblestone, wielded by an unknown ruffian. His face and head were so badly disfigured in the attack that he was unrecognizable. The only way that the police were eventually able to identify him was through his Army discharge papers, which were found in his pocket.

After being found by the police, Charles Elwell, barely clinging to life, was first taken to the Joy Street Police Station, then to the Boston City Hospital, where his life finally slipped away. His assailant was never found, and the reason for the attack will forever remain a mystery.

Charles E. Elwell was born in Bangor, Maine in 1840. On his pension application, he listed his occupation as an artist and mariner. With news of the outbreak of war, Charles traveled from Athens, ME, where he had been living, to Boston, and enlisted in what became Company H of the newly formed 11th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The regiment was mustered into the service June 13, 1861 for a three-year term

The regiment had been raised in April of 1861, largely through the influence of George Clark, Jr., an old militia officer from Dorchester, Mass., who became its first colonel. During its initial recruitment it was known as the *Boston Volunteers*, but this was a fairly short-lived name once it was officially designated the 11th Massachusetts. Although a large percentage of the regiment's members were from Boston and Suffolk County, it drew a significant number from Essex County as well.

Charles Elwell served in the 11th Mass. from June of 1861 to December 26, 1863, being honorably discharged because of a disability, which resulted from wounds suffered to his right knee at Second Battle of Manasses. Joining General Pope's army near Warrenton Junction the 11th Mass. was heavily engaged near Groveton, on August 29th, 1862 where it led a bayonet charge by the entire brigade against Stonewall Jackson's line along the railroad embankment. It was here that Charles Elwell, who had escaped injury during the First Battle of Bull Run and throughout the Peninsula Campaign, received the wound to his leg which would eventually lead to his discharge the following year. The 11th lost a total of 28 officers and men killed or mortally wounded at Groveton.

After recovering from his wounds, Charles Elwell remained with the regiment through the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. In the Winter of 1863, following the Mine Run Campaign, Charles Elwell was unable to continue with the regiment. With less than six months remaining on his enlistment, Charles was sent to a military hospital in Alexandria, VA, where, on December 26th, 1863, he was discharged due to disability.

Charles E. Elwell is interred at the Mt. Hope Cemetery, in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston.

Notes: The 11th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry served in the War of the Rebellion from June 13, 1861 to July 14, 1865, participating in every campaign of the Army of the Potomac, except Antietam. Only one Massachusetts infantry regiment, (the 20th) was engaged in more battles.
Susan Etta Elwell, Charles' daughter, was my Grandmother. Her daughter, Edna married Charles E. Tucker, my father.

Editor's Note: "My Civil War Ancestor" is a regular feature in The Clarion Call. Members of the Department of Massachusetts are strongly encouraged to submit a story and photograph, (if available) of their Civil War Ancestor to the The Clarion Call for future publication.

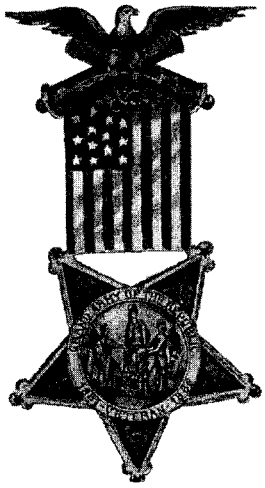
MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT SECRETARY

Department of Massachusetts Members:

This copy of the Clarion Call is being mailed to you using the "Banner" mailing list from the National Organization. Included in that list are some unaccounted for Members-at-Large, and some "dropped" members who should have been removed. We would ask your assistance to correct this situation.
If you are not a Member of a "Camp in Good Standing" and are a Member at Large, please contact the Department Secretary with your name, address and your status or desire as to your Membership.

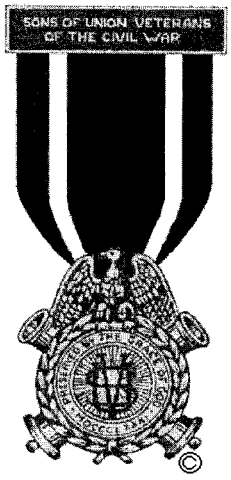
Send to:
William T. Ryerson, Sr.
Secretary, Dept. of Mass.
P.O. Box 11
Winchester, MA 01890
or email me at:
secretary@suvmass.org

G.A.R.



1866

S.U.V.C.W.



1881

The Clarion Call

Newsletter of the Department of Massachusetts
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

VISIT THE DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS WEBSITE AT
www.suvmass.org

The Clarion Call
14 Crestview Terrace
Gloucester, MA 01930

The Clarion Call is published quarterly by the Department of Massachusetts Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The publication is copyrighted and may not be reproduced in whole or part, in any manner without the expressed written consent of the Department of Massachusetts, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.